

## Episode 38

### Demise of My Respected Father (may Allah's mercy be upon him)

My respected father had suffered the first heart attack in *Rabee ath-Thanee* 1392H, equivalent to 8 June 1972. From then on, his debility continued to increase. Initially, he desired to complete Tafsir Maariful Quran and would remain busy writing it on his bed. The Sunday gathering would also take place in his room itself, and Hazrat Maulana Qari Riayatullah Sahab (may Allah's mercy be upon him), who was the Director of Darul Uloom in those days, would visit his room every day before Zuhr, sit on a chair in front of him, and would apprise him of important matters related to Darul Uloom, and would also receive his guidance. Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ashiq Ilahi Sahab (may Allah's mercy be upon him) was managing the Darul Ifta, and he would also sometimes visit Hazrat to seek his counsel regarding some Fatwa. And I had made my office in the room next door to my respected father's (may Allah's mercy be upon him) and was acting as his nameless secretary. From time to time, Hazrat would feel pressure on his heart, and signs of the sorrow it evoked in him would be evident on his blessed face. At such instances, some home remedies would be employed. Hazrat would lie on his side, while I or brother Rafi (may his shade be extended) would gently press on both sides of his spine. This would alleviate the pain to some extent. However, this condition continued increasing in frequency and the sorrow on his face also increased, until one day he remarked: "Now my heart does not desire anything. So much so, that the desire to complete Maariful Quran has also perished. I am pleased with whatever amount Allah Ta'ala allows to complete." And he would also often recite the following Verse:

مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ

"What is with you shall perish and what is with Allah shall last." (Surah Nahl, 16:96)

Despite this, he continued working on the Tafsir, and with the grace and favour of Allah Ta'ala, it was completed on 21 Shaban 1392H. In those days, large financial resources were required to publish such a large eight-volume Tafsir, which were unavailable at first. But then a South African devotee of our respected father (may Allah's mercy be upon him), respected Haji Abdul Hayy

Warachchia (may Allah's mercy be upon him), offered to cover the expenses of publishing the first volume. Thereafter our respected father (may Allah's mercy be upon him) arranged for the sale of the first volume through my elder brother Hazrat Muhammad Razi Usmani Sahab's (may Allah's mercy be upon him) publishing house Darul Ishaat, and saved the entire revenue from its sale to publish the second volume. At first, he would keep the record of the revenue and expenses by himself, but later assigned this task to me. I would record the entire income from sale of one volume and use this amount to cover the expenses incurred in the publication of the next volume. In this manner, Allah Ta'ala arranged for the publication of all eight volumes.

After the completion of Maariful Quran, our respected father (may Allah's mercy be upon him) made some old works the focus of his attention. These were those he had started working on at some point but were left incomplete. Between the end of 1392H and the Umrah trip of 1395H, he completed several such works.

After this second heart attack, which occurred during my trip to Nairobi and whose details I have mentioned previously, our respected father's (may Allah's mercy be upon him) health deteriorated further. From then on, he had handed over most management duties to my elder brother Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Rafi Sahab (may his shade be extended), Hazrat Maulana Qari Riayatullah Sahab and Hazrat Maulana Sehban Mahmood Sahab (may Allah's mercy be upon them both), and from the way he conducted himself, it appeared as if he were waiting to be taken to Allah like a traveler waiting for a train. His entire life had been spent in writing, and my late mother, who was herself ill at that time, had always seen him writing something. Now when she would see him without a pen in hand, it appeared as if this sight hurt her. She would say to our respected father (may Allah's mercy be upon him): "Write something", which would evoke a wistful smile on our respected father's (may Allah's mercy be upon him) face. Nevertheless, the work of reviewing Fatwas continued till the end. Also, the Sunday gathering would continue such that Hazrat Maulana Mufti Abdur Rauf Sahab (may his shade be extended) would read aloud the discourses of Hazrat Hakeem Ul Ummah and our respected father (may Allah's mercy be upon him) would elucidate upon them at some places.

In the last Sunday gathering before his demise, I arrived late. The room was full by the time I reached, so I was trying to find some place to sit in the last row. When Hazrat (may Allah's mercy be upon him) saw me, he said: "Come, sit here with me on the charpoy." When he saw signs of hesitation on my face, he said: "Come, I will narrate to you an anecdote." Complying with his order, I made my way towards my respected father's (may Allah's mercy be upon him) charpoy and sat on the foot-side. Then he narrated: "One time, it happened with me as well that I was late for Hazrat Hakeem Ul Ummah's gathering and was trying to find some place in the last row. At this, Hazrat called me to sit near him (perhaps on a seat or charpoy). When I hesitated, Hazrat said: "Come, I will narrate to you an anecdote." I complied with his order and sat near him. Thereafter Hazrat related the following incident: "After Shah Jahan's death, the question arose as to who among his two sons Aurangzeb Alamgir and Dara Shikoh should succeed him as the king. There lived a Sufi elder (whose name I cannot remember now) in those days. Both of them visited him to attain his supplications in their favour. Dara Shikoh went first. The elder instructed him to sit beside him on the chair, but he excused himself with the words: "I am not worthy of sitting beside you." Later Aurangzeb Alamgir visited him. The elder instructed him as well to sit beside him on the chair, at which he proceeded and sat on the chair without any hesitation. At that, the elder remarked: "Both of them have decided for themselves regarding who should sit on the throne." And it so transpired later that Aurangzeb acquired the royal throne."

Anyway! Our respected father (may Allah's mercy be upon him) passed his days waiting for his demise. One day, someone visited him to enquire about his health and supplicated for our respected father's complete recovery. When he went back, our respected father's eyes spontaneously moistened and he began reciting the following couplet:

وہ لوگ جو میرے لئے خواہاں ہیں شفا کے

وہ کوس رہے ہیں مجھے پردے میں دعا کے

Those who are desirous of my recovery

In fact curse me, behind the veil of supplication

In the meanwhile, Ramadan arrived and his health remained worse than normal the entire month. He would feel pressure on his heart every now and then and his sorrow continued to increase. After Eid, he remarked one day: “My situation is strange. During the blessed month of Ramadan, the heart would sometimes desire: “My time appears close by. It would be good if I passed away in Ramadan.” But I could never get myself to supplicate for this, because I thought: “If I pass away in Ramadan, my household and associates, besides having to undergo this distress during fasting time, would also have to undertake the hardships of arranging for my funeral.”” Thereafter he recited the following couplet:

تمام عمر اسی احتیاط میں گزری

کہ آشیاں کسی شاخ چمن پہ بار نہ ہو

The entire life was passed in this cautiousness

That my nest should not bear heavily upon any branch of the garden

Finally, the promised time arrived exactly ten days after the end of the blessed month of Ramadan. He wrote a Fatwa in the morning, and immediately after he had a severe heart attack. The same evening, which was the night of 11<sup>th</sup> of Shaban 1396H, the entire surroundings were plunged in darkness due to a power blackout. Our respected father’s (may Allah’s mercy be upon him) doctor Dr Aslam Sahab insisted upon taking him to the hospital. At first he was not willing, but at Dr Sahab’s insistence he agreed. The respected doctor had already informed us that his condition was critical. In short, he was taken to the hospital and it was there that he relinquished his soul to his Creator. *Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilayhi Raji’oon* (We certainly belong to Allah, and to Him we are bound to return.)

During our respected father’s (may Allah’s mercy be upon him) lifetime, whenever the thought of his demise would occur to me, it would feel as if I would be unable to bear this tribulation. However, when the time actually arrived, it felt as if my tears had dried. Allah Ta’ala gave strength

to us four brothers, three sisters and our late mother, and this biggest calamity of our lives also passed by. رحمه الله تعالى رحمة واسعة وأسكنه جنت النعيم في مقعد صدق.

Regarding our respected father (may Allah's mercy be upon him), I published Al-Balagh's Mufti-e-Azam edition in two volumes, in which Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Rafi Usmani (may his shade be extended) wrote a brief biography of our respected father (may Allah's mercy be upon him) titled "*Hayat-e-Mufti-e-Azam*", and I wrote a detailed essay regarding his temperament and disposition under the title "*Meray Walid Meray Shaikh*". Both of these writings have also been published as separate books. Furthermore, extremely beneficial articles regarding our respected father (may Allah's mercy be upon him) written by eminent scholars of the time were also included in that edition.

## **Educational Conference in Makkah Mukarramah**

This is from the days of our respected father's illness. I do not remember the exact year now, but perhaps it was 1973. When the time of Hajj approached, I received an offer to perform *Hajj al-Badal* on someone's behalf. I had not received an opportunity to visit the Haramain Shareefain since the Hajj of 1964. Therefore, the heart was quite tantalized by this offer. However, due to my respected father's illness, the heart could also not be convinced to leave him in this state. Somehow our respected father came to learn about this offer and he also granted tacit permission. However, after musing over this matter the heart gave the verdict: "Alhamdulillah the Fard Hajj has been performed. It is not suitable to perform Nafil Hajj in the present circumstances." I thus decided to decline this offer. At some point, our respected father asked: "What happened to your Hajj?" At this, the following words escaped my mouth: "Father! My Hajj and Umrah are here itself." Our respected father was much pleased at hearing these words, supplicated for this lowly one and said something along the lines: "InshaAllah you will be granted numerous opportunities to visit the Haramain Shareefain." It is a result of my respected father's prayers that Alhamdulillah after that year, no year passed by without getting opportunities to visit the Haramain Shareefain more than once. Rather it has now been years upon years that an opportunity to visit comes by every three to four months. Shortly after this incident, first the

opportunity to perform Umrah in Ramadan in the company of my respected father was attained, details of which I have presented before. Later, a few months after my respected father's demise, the Head of Karachi University's Department of Arabic Studies came to me and said: "In collaboration with Jeddah's King Abdul Aziz University, we are organizing an international conference in Makkah Mukarramah under the title "Islamic Education". Please write an article describing the educational system and curriculum of religious Madrasas in Pakistan, and participate in this conference with that paper." I thus wrote an essay titled "*Manhaj at-Ta'leem ad-Deeniyy Fee Bakistan*" and sent it to the conference organizers, which has now been published separately as well, and now, after revision and some additions in light of modern circumstances, has become a part of my collection of Arabic essays titled "*Maqalaat al-Uthmani*".

When the time of the conference approached, my childhood friend respected Muhammad Kaleem Sahab (*mujaz-e-baiyah* of Hazrat Arifi (may his secret be sanctified)) decided to go for Umrah together with me, and remained with me on this entire trip at his own expenses. The conference started on 12<sup>th</sup> Rabee ath-Thanee 1397H, equivalent to 31 March 1977. In those days, a powerful movement against the late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Sahab was raging in the nation, due to which the country was reeling from unrest. As a result, it took time to obtain permission from the government of Pakistan and I could only depart two days after the start of the conference. In those days, in a suburb of Makkah Mukarramah called "*Umm al-Jood*", the Intercontinental Hotel had newly been constructed with great glory and splendour. The conference was taking place in it and the participants were also accommodated in the same hotel. We thus arrived there. A room had been booked in this hotel for me. However, due to its distance from the Haram, staying in this hotel weighed heavily upon me. I therefore requested the organizers to shift my accommodation to Funduq Makkah. Though it was not as grand as Hotel Intercontinental, it was located right in front of Bab al-Umrah of the Haram, and in the Ramadan of 1974, we had stayed there with our respected father. The heart's desire was thus fulfilled and closeness to the Haram was achieved. We would go to Hotel Intercontinental during conference times and enjoy the blessing of the Haram at other times. While I had participated in several international conferences as an attendant of our respected father, this was my first time attending one as an invitee. Fortunately, Hazrat Maulana Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi Sahab (may Allah's mercy be

upon him) was amongst the distinguished invitees, so I received the opportunity to benefit from his company during the conference, and was showered by Hazrat's blessings and graces throughout that time.

This conference was successful in this respect that 313 representatives from 40 countries compiled detailed foundation principles, with much wisdom and insight, with regards to the system of education in Islamic countries. I have described the details of this conference and my impressions in Al-Balagh's editorial of Jamadi ath-Thani 1397H, and perhaps it may be included in some collection of my essays which is under compilation.

But it was at this very occasion that Hazrat Maulana Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi (may Allah's mercy be upon him) one time advised me in private: "Having participated in several such conferences, it is my experience that there is not much benefit in participating in them. Real work is that which you are doing alone. You should focus more on your writing works, and it would be better for you if you were to minimize participation in useless conferences as much as possible." After that, I tried to avoid political and general conferences as much as possible, and would excuse myself from most conferences of such nature. And if ever I participated, it was due to some compulsion or in hope of some benefit. At the same time, I got numerous opportunities to participate in Fiqh-related gatherings, because they are a beneficial means for scholars to come together and discuss communal Fiqh-related issues. And besides gaining knowledge, numerous Fiqh-related issues were cleared up in these. I will mention a few details of these at an appropriate place InshaAllah.

It was at this occasion that Hazrat Maulana Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi Sahab (may Allah's mercy be upon him) also asked me: "With regards to communal Fiqh-related matters, besides a balanced approach, I have also observed flexibility in your respected father's (may Allah's mercy be upon him) viewpoint. What is his opinion with regards to benefiting from other madhhabs together with the Hanafi madhhab?" I submitted: "With regards to communal needs, he does not consider it an issue to benefit from any of the four madhhabs, but he avoids going beyond the four madhhabs." At this he remarked: "In my point of view, all our communal needs can be fulfilled within the four madhhabs. There is no need to go beyond them."

I also remember from this trip that by that time, Hazrat Maulana Ashiq Ilahi Sahab (may Allah's mercy be upon him) had taken leave from Darul Uloom with the intention of migrating to Hijaz. In those days, he was residing in Makkah Mukarramah such that he had no source of income. He came to Funduq Makkah to meet me. I privately asked him: "What is the arrangement for your expenses?" He replied with a smile on his face: "What are my expenses in the first place? A riyal a day." From this we can imagine how he was living his life for the sake of migrating to Madinah. There was arrangement for tea in front of my hotel room. Offering him my hospitality, I offered him tea, but he replied: "You are the guest here, so while this tea is permissible for you, it is not permissible for me." I submitted: "This tea is arranged here so that it could be partaken any time one wanted, and it is customarily understood that the guest of a guest is also one's guest. It is for this reason that I offered the tea. Otherwise, in instances where this is not customary, I do not make such offers." At this he replied: "What is the need to go into such detailed reasoning? What is the harm if I do not take the tea?" The heart was much affected by this *Taqwa* of his. May Allah Ta'ala raise his status. He would impart lessons even in light-hearted conversations.

After staying in Makkah Mukarramah, a few days were spent in peace and well-being in Madinah Munawwarah as well, and thereafter I returned home.

### **A Small Service to *I'la us-Sunan***

Hakeem Ul Ummah Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Sahab Thanvi (may Allah's mercy be upon him) had started a major scholarly project by the name of "*I'la us-Sunan*". The basic objective of this was to collect and provide a detailed commentary of those Hadith which are the foundation of the Hanafi school of thought. Initially, he had assigned this task to Hazrat Maulana Ahmad Hasan Sunbhuli (may Allah's mercy be upon him). Later, he entrusted it to Hazrat Maulana Zafar Ahmad Sahab Usmani (may Allah's mercy be upon him), and it is difficult to find a parallel for the immense hard work and competence with which he compiled this momentous book. Nonetheless, this feat was still in the form of a manuscript. And due to lack of resources, Hazrat Maulana Shabeer Ali Thanvi (may Allah's mercy be upon him) published its first edition on low-quality paper and mediocre typesetting and publication quality, so that it could be preserved and

reach the scholars, and with a view to re-publish a better-quality edition when such an opportunity arose.

When Maulana Noor Ahmad Sahab (may Allah's mercy be upon him) took up the mission of republishing *I'la us-Sunan* as a composition print through his Idaarat al-Quran, Hazrat Maulana Zafar Ahmad Sahab (may Allah's mercy be upon him) reviewed its first volume, details of which I have mentioned in the introduction to *I'la us-Sunan*. At that point, the thought occurred to me that editions of the books cited in *I'la us-Sunan* have changed, which means that it could now be difficult for readers to find the references cited in it. To this end, I thought it would be convenient for readers if I were to update the citations with respect to new editions of the books and the relevant chapter headings for its new edition. I thus began this task relying on Allah. This required referring to numerous books, so I began this work while sitting in Darul Uloom's library, which was in an extremely dilapidated state at that time. Initially, the only point in mind was to update the references, but when work was started, other aspects presented themselves. For example, with respect to the explanations provided by Hazrat Usmani (may Allah's mercy be upon him) related to Fiqh-related issues, if the original source book did not mention the opinions of the jurists of the various schools of thought, then some details regarding the rulings of other madhhabs were added. Similarly, the *takhreej* of Hadith in some places was also added.

Hazrat Shaikh Abdul Fattah Abu Ghuddah (may Allah's mercy be upon him) was residing in Riyadh in those days. He expressed his happiness at this work. Thereafter I sent some pages from the first volume in Hazrat's service. He was ill at the time, but in spite of this sent a reply letter comprising of seven pages. This reply contained detailed instructions regarding the way the book should be published as well as a four-page *taqreez* which has been published at the beginning of *I'la us-Sunan*. Whatever Hazrat wrote regarding that *taqreez* in the letter sheds some light on the lofty level of Hazrat's humility. I am reproducing that part of the letter below:

"أخي الأعز: ما أزال في أعقاب المرض والمحمد لله، وكاد يزول عني وقبل زواله خلفه زكام شديد، سد الحياشيم والأسعاع، وذهب بالفكر والذهن إلى أعمق الأصقاع، وصرت في أشدّ الحجل والخرج من تأخري بالكتابة اليكم، فكتبت والعينان تكفان، والذهن كليل عليل - الكلمات التي ترونها ضحبة هذه الرسالة، وأرجو أن أكون قاريث المقام، ومعدرة من التقصير والتأخر، وأستحلفكم بالله أن تكونوا علي أتمّ الحرّية والاختيار في إلغاء الكلمة، أو إثباتها أو طي ما شئتم منها، أو

تعدّل ما ترون تعدّله فيها، فهي كلمة محبّ ولا ريب -، ولكنّه عليل كليل فعذرّه مقبول، وبضاعته مزجاة، ورحم الله امراء أعرف حدّه ووقف عنده، فتصرّفوا فيها بما ترون دون ما حرج أو تلكأ، والله ينفع بكم ويرعاكم.

وأما الملاحظات حول النهج في الإخراج، فأبعث بها إليكم مشاراً إليهما على ذات الملازم التي أتحفتموني بها، نظراً إلى أنّي الآن مريض، وإلى أنّ الإشارة المجردة دون الإشارة المعرّفة، التي قال فيها الإمام أبو حنيفة رضي الله عنه: هي أشهر طرق التعريف. وأمل أن لا أتأخّر في إرسالها طوإلاً.

“My dearest brother! I am currently indisposed and my illness is in its final stages. Though I am near recovery, a severe flu has replaced the illness, which has blocked the nose and ears and has taken the mind and intellect somewhere far away. And I am in a state of deep regret and embarrassment at the delay in replying to your letter. The words (of *taqreez*) which you find with this letter have been written in such a state that the eyes are flowing and the ailing mind is weary. I hope I have reached near, and please excuse me for any deficiency and delay! And I beseech you in the name of Allah that you have complete freedom to remove any word from it you wish and to retain any word you wish, or to delete any part you want or modify it in any way you feel appropriate, because though indeed these are the words of one who loves you, he is frail and sick, and his capital is meager. And may Allah have mercy on the person who recognizes his limits and stops within them. Therefore make any changes (to the *taqreez*) as you wish without any hesitation or qualms. May Allah make you a means of benefit, and protect you.

As for my opinion regarding the methodology of the book, I have put my comments in the margins of the pages you sent.”

Thereafter with regards to the pages I had sent to Hazrat, Hazrat bestowed his opinions by commenting on various places in those pages. And on 6<sup>th</sup> of Shawwal 1366H, he wrote the following letter addressed to me:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إلي الأخ الكريم فضيلة الأستاذ الشيخ محمد تقي الثماني الموهوب المحبوب حفظه الله تعالى ورعاه وأكرمه وأولاه.

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته، وبعد، فأرجو أن تكونوا بخير من الله ونعمة وعافية سابعة ورافقة.

أبعث إليكم بالملازم التي نِعِمْتُ بالنظر فيها، امتثالاً لأمركم الحبيب، وأشرت بعض الإشارات علي خطتها المطبعية رجاء التحسين التجميل، فوق الكحل الجميل، ولعلّ الإشارات بالقلم تفيد ما رغبتُم بيانه، ولكم النظر الأسد في الإثبات والإلغاء لما نهجتموه، والذي أشرت إليه أظنّ أنّه يلائم ذوقكم الرفيع، ونظركم البديع، ولكم تحياتي وشكري، وارفَعُوا تحياتي إلي ساحة السيد مولانا الوالد حفظه الله تعالى وأمدّه بالعافية والشفاء، ونفعنا بصالح دعواته وأُنْقِصْه العالِية، وتحتاتي أيضاً إلي فضيلة الأخ العزيز محمد رفيع رفع الله مقامه وأتمّ عليه فضله وإنعامه، وإلي أنجالكم المحبوبين، أقرّ الله بهم العيون والقلوب، وأكرمني بصالح دعواتكم جميعاً، وأستودعكم الله، إلي لقاء حبيب قريب بإذن الله، والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته.

الرياض، الأربعاء ١٣٩٦/١٠/٦

عبد الفتاح أبو غدة

أرجو إرسال نسخة (إعلاء السنن) مع حامل هذه التحية، وشكراً.

Just five days after the date he wrote this letter, i.e. on the 11<sup>th</sup> of Shawwal, our respected father (may his secret be sanctified) passed away, and I probably received this letter after his demise.

In this manner, Alhamdulillah work on the marginalia of two volumes of *l'la us-Sunan* was completed. However, I could not keep up with the speed at which the volumes of *l'la us-Sunan* were (MashaAllah) being published. And later it was deemed suitable for the publication of this momentous book not to be delayed due to this work of mine. Therefore further volumes were published without my added notes, and Alhamdulillah this momentous task was completed. Anyway! Though on only two volumes, I at least received the blessing of a small service to this landmark book.